THE CARBONDALE NEWS, Wednesday, December 15, 1982, p. B4

"New life" brought to 3rd floor of City Hall

The Carbondale Historical Society held its first Christmas party last Thursday in Room 301 of Carbondale's City Hall. Making City Hall the showplace it was in former years was the reason the Committee to Restore City Hall was formed last year, and that group recently merged with the historical society.

S. Robert Powell, society president, commented "City council gave the society permission to use Room 301 as its base of operations, and as a tradeoff, our group is restoring the room. We would have gotten around to restoring it in any case, but probably at a later date." Over the years, the third floor room had fallen into disrepair, and plaster was crumbling from the walls. During the weeks prior to the Christmas party, society members stripped down the plaster and installed sheetrock on two walls.

"Right now, you might say the room is in a transitional stage. It's not done, but it's in much better condition than it was," Powell said, adding that about $300 in supplies will probably cover work needed to bring the room up to standard. Members who volunteered to work on the room restoration include Russell, William and S. Robert Powell, Bob Tomaine, Jane Dailey and John Buberniak. "I know that if we had to pay a contractor to do the work, it would probably cost the society a few thousand dollars," Powell mentioned.

During last Thursday's Christmas party, society members and guests trimmed a Christmas tree with old-fashioned ornaments, popcorn strings, paper garlands and pine cones. As refreshments, a large variety of Christmas cookies, baked by Nan Daniels, and a strawberry holiday punch, were enjoyed. A grab bag gift was conducted, and guests drew numbers for prizes, including Chinese teas, pottery and fans. Afterward, a business meeting was held, with Powell presiding.

Among those attending the party were Susan Stephens, Joseph Pascoe, Kitty Campbell, Anne Rogalski, Marion F. Watson, Dorothy Essif, Howard Yepson, Bob Tomaine, Jane Dailey, Kay and Oliver Shifler, Nan Daniels, John Buberniak and Powell.

Room 301 will be completely restored within the next few weeks, and, at the end of January, a photography exhibit will be held there, sponsored by Metro Publishing Company, Scranton. Also by that time the room will be furnished with some tables and chairs. Folding chairs were recently donated by society members Kay and Oliver Shifler.g"The society hopes to have continuous exhibits or programs held at Room 301. We want to start a tradition of activities for the public to enjoy," Powell said. In the future, the group hopes to display the portraits of Carbondale's mayors in the room. "Many of the portraits are still missing, and I hope that persons who have them will return them to the city. It would be sad to lose that part of our heritage," Powell pointed out. The society also plans to display a collection of historical memorabilia in the room, and to develop a museum there eventually. The group's historical research materials will remain at Carbondale's Public Library.

In a room nearby, Powell pointed out an old wooden Santa Claus form, which was dressed in the traditional Santa outfit and mounted on the city hall second story balcony at least 30 years ago. The chest area is basically a barrel, about two feet wide and three feet long, while the entire form is about six feet tall. Above the barrel's "shoulders" is an assembly of rods connected to metal balls, which served as the figure's eyes. The mechanism was driven by a motor which caused the eyes and mouth to move, making a happy Christmas display to all who saw it. Does anyone recall seeing "Santa" adorning City Hall?